

# ITEM 7-A

## CITY OF ALAMEDA

### Memorandum

To: Honorable President and  
Members of the Planning Board

From: Andrew Thomas, City Planner

Date: July 13, 2015

Re: **PLN14-0701 – 2100 Clement Avenue – Applicant: City Ventures.** Public Hearing to consider a draft Vesting Tentative Map, Density Bonus application, Development Plan, and Design Review to Permit Construction of 52 Units on a 2.78 Acre Parcel Located at 2100 Clement Avenue. The proposal is categorically exempt from further review under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 Infill Development Projects.

### BACKGROUND

On June 22, 2015, the Planning Board held a public hearing to consider this proposal to construct 52 residential units and a publically accessible open space on a 2.78 acre property located at 2100 Clement Avenue. At the hearing, the Planning Board considered public testimony and identified a number of issues to be addressed prior to a final decision by the Planning Board. The June 22, 2015 staff report is attached for reference purposes as Exhibit 1.

Since the meeting, the applicant has prepared revisions to the project plans to address most of the Planning Board and community issues. Those issues and revisions are described below. The changes are shown on the revised Development Plan (Exhibit 2). A condition of approval requires that the Tentative Map be revised to reflect the Development Plan prior to submittal to the City Council.

### DISCUSSION

On June 22, 2015, the Planning Board and Alameda community raised the following major issues and requests:

Existing Businesses: The Planning Board requested that the City work with the existing tenants to facilitate relocation of these businesses to other locations within Alameda. The applicant is providing contact information for the existing businesses on the property to the City of Alameda Economic Development Department. The Economic Development staff will be contacting the businesses to offer assistance with potential relocation to another Alameda location.

The Central Park and Guest Parking. The Planning Board requested a redesign of the central park and guest parking to improve the design of the park. The June 22, 2015 site plan included approximately 8,300 square feet of Public Park surrounding a 15 space guest parking lot. The revised plans:

- Increase the size of the park from approximately 8,300 square feet to approximately 14,300 square feet.

- Remove automobile parking from within the park and eliminates automobile travel through the park.
- Reduces the guest parking from 12 to six (6) spaces and distributes the six spaces throughout the property.

Preserving Mature Trees: The Planning Board requested that the plans preserve as many mature trees as possible.

To ensure that the project preserves as many existing mature trees as possible, a condition of approval requires that City Ventures prepare a Street Tree Preservation and Replacement Plan ("Tree Plan") for neighborhood and Planning Board approval. If the plan includes removal of an Oak Tree, the plan will also need to be approved by the Historical Advisory Board.

To prepare the Tree Plan, City Ventures will need to work closely with the neighbors, Alameda Municipal Power, the Public Works Department, and East Bay Municipal Utility District to ensure that the Tree Plan is closely coordinated with the requirements to underground the utilities on Willow Street and Clement Avenue and improve the curb, gutter and sidewalk on all three public street frontages. Once the draft Plan is completed, a noticed public hearing before the Planning Board (and if necessary, before the Historical Advisory Board) will be held to receive public comment and make a final decision on the Tree Plan.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Public Access and Alameda Unified School District (AUSD). The June 22nd plan proposed a 20 foot wide bicycle and pedestrian lane along the eastern property line on an existing public utilities easement that would terminate at the edge of the AUSD property and be extended through to Clement Avenue at some later date when and if AUSD redevelops their property. The speakers discussed the benefits of completing the proposed bicycle and pedestrian path all the way through to Clement Avenue, if possible.

A condition of approval has been added to facilitate the extension to Clement with the construction of this project. The condition of approval requires that City Ventures construction of the extension through to Clement Avenue, unless the Alameda Unified School District refuses public access to the public utilities easement. If AUSD denies public access on their portion of the public utilities easement, then City Ventures will not be required to extend the lane beyond the confines of the project site.

Setbacks: At the Planning Board meeting, a number of residents asked City Ventures to increase the front setbacks on the project.

The revised plan increases the setback of the three main buildings along Eagle from 11 feet from the inside edge of the sidewalk to approximately 13 feet to the edge of the sidewalk. The side porch of building at the corner of Willow and Eagle encroaches to within 8 feet of the Eagle sidewalk, but the majority of the building is approximately 13 feet from the sidewalk.

Along Willow Street, the front of each residential structure is set back 11 feet from the edge of the sidewalk.

At the corner of Willow Street and Clement Avenue, the corner building side elevation is eight (8) feet from the sidewalk at its closest point. The other building which faces Clement Avenue is set back 13 feet from the sidewalk. (The project is widening the Clement Avenue sidewalk to six feet. It is currently about 24 inches wide.)

Although the proposed 11 to 13 foot setbacks are less than the typical front setback in the surrounding neighborhoods, some homes in the area do have similar setbacks and it is common in Alameda for different blocks to have slightly different front setbacks. Furthermore, an 11 to 13 foot separation between the public sidewalk and the front stoop or porch of a townhome or row house is an adequate front setback. Townhomes and row houses are historically constructed closer to the sidewalk than single family homes.

Impacts on Future Transit Services on Clement and Buena Vista: The Planning Board asked for clarification as to whether the project would generate enough traffic on Clement Avenue and/or Buena Vista to cause an impact to future transit services on these two future transit streets.

TJKM, Traffic Engineers determined that the number of new auto trips generated by the project on Clement Avenue and Buena Vista would not be enough to result in a 10% reduction in travel speed on those two streets. Therefore the project would not have an impact on future transit services on those streets. The TJKM analysis is included in Exhibit 4.

Architectural Design Review. At the hearing, it was stated that the architectural design of the proposed buildings would require some additional work and refinement. The applicant's architects have not yet completed their revisions. A recommended condition of approval requires that the revised architectural designs be completed for Planning Board review and approval at a noticed public hearing before any building permits are issued for the project.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Staff recommends approval of the Vesting Tentative Map and Development Plan for the following reasons:

- General Plan and Zoning Consistency: The proposal is consistent with the General Plan and Zoning designations for the property. The residential use and density is consistent with the R-2/PD Zoning, and the residential use implements the General Plan MU-5 mixed use land use designation. In addition, the proposed project is consistent with Plan Bay Area, the Bay Area's long-range integrated transportation and land use/housing strategy to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions, combat climate change, and reduce vehicle miles traveled to reduce regional traffic congestion.
- Housing Goals: The City of Alameda and the Bay Area as a whole are experiencing a housing crisis. The lack of housing in the Bay Area, and Alameda in particular, is resulting in dramatically escalating housing costs and rents and growing concerns about displacement of long-time Alameda residents. The development of the site with 52 residential units, including seven deed restricted affordable housing units, is consistent with the goals and objectives of the City of Alameda's General Plan Housing Element and helps the City achieve its regional housing needs allocation. Further, the project includes townhomes, which are typically more affordable than a single-family home in Alameda.
- Neighborhood Compatibility: The proposal provides a well-designed site plan that will complement and support the neighborhood. The proposed project has been revised to address concerns and suggestions provided by the Planning Board and the adjacent neighbors to ensure that the project complements and supports the residential environment and setting in the area. The expansion of the park area to Eagle Avenue will provide an opportunity for the new residents to interact and socialize with the existing residents in the neighborhood and facilitate neighborhood activities, relationships, and community building.

In addition to the common, public open spaces, the project provides private open space for each unit in the form of a front yard and porch area. Although private, these spaces line the public sidewalks on Clement, Eagle, and Willow Street, which will support a pedestrian friendly, community oriented environment along the public streets, where neighbors can meet each other, look out for each other, and develop relationships that build community.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The project is categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15332 In-Fill Development Projects, based upon the following criteria, which were documented in this report and the exhibits:

- a. The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and policies and zoning designation and regulations.
- b. The proposal is located within the city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- c. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. The site has been developed and operated as a light manufacturing and warehousing facility since the 1940s.
- d. The project would not result in significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality. (See Exhibit 4-Initial Study).
- e. The site is adequately served by all required utilities and public services. As documented in the General Plan and Housing Element, the site is adequately serviced by existing services.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Hold a public hearing and approve a draft Resolution recommending that the City Council approve Vesting Tentative Map and Density Bonus application and conditionally approving the Development Plan.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Andrew Thomas  
City Planner

Exhibits:

- 1. June 22, 2015 Staff Report
- 2. July 2, 2015 Development Plan Submittal
- 3. July 2, 2015 Vesting Tentative Map Submittal
- 4. TJKM Memorandum.
- 5. July 2, 2015 Density Bonus Application
- 6. Initial Study (Distributed in June 22, 2015 Agenda Packet)
- 7. Resolution recommending City Council approval of the Vesting Tentative Map and approving the Development Plan, Density Bonus, and Density Bonus Waiver applications